



## **Irish Railway Factsheet: Sligo Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway**

During the war years, the **Sligo Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway (SL&NCR)** was in the unusual position of making a profit and receiving financial assistance from the Northern Ireland Government. Fuel restrictions on road transport led to a large increase in the company's traffic and in 1944 a railcar was ordered from Walker Brothers of Wigan. However, the ending of the war and the resumption of competition from the road sector, saw the company's financial situation begin to worsen, a situation which was to last until the demise of the company.

By 1946, the motive power situation was critical. As no suitable locomotives were available for loan from either the GNR(I) or CIÉ, Beyer Peacock were approached with an order for an 0-6-4T type locomotive. Despite the company's worsening financial situation a second similar locomotive was ordered during the following year. Also in 1947, the railcar ordered from Walker Bros. was delivered to Enniskillen. This was a 107 h.p., duo-directional car, consisting of a power unit and cab mounted on a four-wheel driving bogie articulated with a 59-seat passenger saloon, mounted on a carrying bogie. The passenger section also included a luggage compartment, at the articulation end, and a half-cab at the opposite end. Operating costs were quoted as being 4d (1½p) per mile, compared to 2/6½ (12½p) per mile for a steam hauled train. The unit was designated 'B' by the company.

The two steam locomotives were ready for delivery in the spring of 1949. At this stage the company entered into negotiations with the Stormont Government with a view to obtaining a loan of £22,000 to cover the cost of the locomotives. Discussions continued until early in 1951, when a hire-purchase agreement was reached, with the locomotives being delivered in June and July of that year. Apart from the 'Turf Burner' built by CIÉ, these were the last new steam locomotives to enter service with an Irish railway company and were named 'Lough Melvin' and 'Lough Erne', the SL&NCR not being in the practice of numbering its steam locomotives.



*SL&NCR locomotive 'Enniskillen' with crew and staff at Sligo on the last day of railway services, 30 September 1957. (Photo © Robin N Clements - IRRS Archive)*



*SL&NCR articulated railcar 'B' at Sligo, circa 1955. (Photo © John Macartney Robbins - IRRS Archive)*